



US Army Corps  
of Engineers

Baltimore District

Public Affairs Office

P.O. Box 1715

Baltimore, MD 21203

(410) 962-2809

Fax: (410) 962-3660

# News Release

Release No. 03-03

Contact: Doug Garman

For Release: April 16, 2003

Phone: (410) 962-2809

---

## **Federal flood control projects prevent an estimated \$37 million in potential flood damages in March 2003**

**Baltimore** -- Officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, estimate that federally built levees and reservoirs in the upper Susquehanna River basin prevented nearly \$37 million in potential flood damages during the last two weeks of March 2003.

During this time, the southern New York and northern Pennsylvania region experienced warm temperatures, resulting in the rapid melting of the region's snow pack. This, combined with an additional 1 to 2 inches of rainfall, generated significant rises in stream flows. These events prompted the National Weather Service to forecast that river levels would approach or exceed flood stages in many locations.

According to Corps officials, hydrologic analyses indicated that federally built reservoirs provided enough water storage to significantly reduce river levels during the meltdown and rain. Reservoir operations in the upper Susquehanna basin reduced river levels by approximately 2 feet in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. River levels were also reduced by about 1 foot in the Williamsport, Sunbury and Harrisburg areas of the state.

In southern New York, river levels were reduced by 1.7 feet in Binghamton and 1.6 feet in Corning. As a result of these reductions, many river gages crested just below their respective flood stages. However, some locations still experienced river levels that exceeded flood stage, especially around Binghamton (3 feet to 5 feet) and Wilkes-Barre (approximately 1 foot over flood stage).

During this event, Corps official's estimate that reservoirs and local levees within the basin prevented approximately \$37 million in potential flood damages. It is estimated that reservoirs accounted for approximately \$8 million, and local levees prevented about \$29 million in potential damages.

The Baltimore District currently operates 14 flood control reservoirs in the Susquehanna River basin and two in the Potomac River basin. Since the late 1930s, the Corps has constructed approximately 45 local flood protection levees within the two river basins. Recent levee projects include the Lock Haven Flood Protection Project in Lock Haven, Pa., completed in 1994, and the nearly completed Wyoming Valley Levee Raising Project in Wilkes-Barre.

